

of coastal plain and upland slightly more extensive than France. But if the trans-Appalachian country were ever settled, it would surely break off from the Thirteen States. So at least believed the few Europeans who gave the matter a thought.

Furthermore, America was attempting simultaneously three political experiments, which the accumulated wisdom of Europe deemed likely to fail: independence, republicanism, and federal union. While the British and the Spanish empires touched the states on their north, west, and south, it looked as if independence could only be maintained with more of that European aid by which it had been won, perhaps even by becoming a satellite state. Since the Renaissance, the uniform tendency in Europe had been toward centralized monarchy; federal republics had maintained themselves only in small areas, such as the Netherlands and Switzerland. Most European observers believed that the history of the American Union would be short and stormy.

Indeed the larger part of the American people then lived under isolated conditions. Americans had not yet conquered the forest. Volney wrote that during his journey in 1796 through the length and breadth of the United States, he scarcely traveled for more than three miles together on open and cleared land. Only in southern New England, and the eastern portion of the Middle States, did the cultivated area exceed the woodland.

Yet Americans dwelt in a land of such plenty that exertion had no attraction for the unambitious. The ocean and its shores yielded plenty of fish; the tidal rivers teemed with salmon, sturgeon, herring, and shad in due season, and the upland streams with trout; every kind of game was plentiful, from quail and raccoon to wild turkey and moose; and flights of wild pigeon darkened the air. Cattle and swine thrived on the woodland herbage and mast; Indian corn ripened quickly in the hot summer nights; even sugar could be obtained from the maple, or honey from wild bees. The American of the interior, glutted with nature's bounty and remote from a market, had no immediate incentive to produce much beyond his own actual needs; yet the knowledge that easier life could be had often pressed him westward to more fertile lands, or to a higher scale of living. Hence the note of personal independence that was, and in the main still is, dominant in American life. Although the ordinary American recognized the claims of social rank, he was no longer so willing to defer to the gentry, and social attitudes in

The United States in 1790

I. THE YOUNG REPUBLIC

Twenty-five years had now elapsed since the Stamp Act, and fourteen years since the Thirteen Colonies declared 'to a candid world' that they were 'and of right ought to be, free and independent States.' It is time to take stock, and see what sort of country we had when Washington had been President for less than a year.¹

Much had been said in the debates over the Constitution about the enhanced prestige that it would give to the United States. Official opinion in Europe was not impressed. Not that Europeans perceived danger in American republicanism. With Washington's army disbanded and the navy dismantled, the United States was hardly a feather in the balance of power. Merchants and traders, however, were not indifferent to the new nation. As a source of raw materials for Europe, the United States was not yet in a class with the West Indies; but, for a country of vast empty spaces, it was an important market. Even with the Mississippi as its western boundary, the United States equaled the area of the British Isles, France, Germany, Spain, and Italy. Less than half this territory had yet come under the effective jurisdiction of the United States or of any state; and the population of a little less than four million, including 700,000 Negro slaves, was dispersed over an expanse

1. We have taken the year 1790, rather than 1789, as the central point of this description, because it was the year of the first federal census, which supplies the first statistics, incomplete to be sure and not very accurate, for the United States.

the new nation contrasted markedly with those in Europe. 'The means of subsistence being so easy in the country,' wrote an English observer in 1796, 'and their dependence on each other consequently so trifling, that spirit of servility to those above them so prevalent in European manners, is wholly unknown to them; and they pass their lives without any regard to the smiles or the frowns of men in power.'

However independent of those above him the average American might be, he depended on those about him for help in harvest, in raising his houseframe, and in illness. In a new country you turn to your neighbors for many things that, in a more advanced community, are performed by the government or by specialists. Hence the dual nature of the American: individualism and community spirit, indifference and kindness. Isolation in American foreign policy was a projection of family isolation, and the Marshall Plan was a world-wide extension of neighborly help.

*In 1790 there were only six cities (Philadelphia, New York, Boston, Charleston, Baltimore, and Salem) in the United States with a population of 8000 or more; and their combined numbers included only 3 per cent of the total. No city boasted as many as 50,000 inhabitants. Their aspect resembled that of provincial towns in Great Britain, for no distinctly American architectural style would be invented for another century: brick houses in the Georgian style, often detached and surrounded with gardens and shrubbery; inns with capacious yards and stables; shops and stores with overhanging signs; churches and meeting-houses with graceful spires after Sir Christopher Wren; market houses or city halls of the same style, often placed in the middle of a broad street or square, with arcades to serve as stalls or merchants' exchange; unpainted wooden houses where the poorer people lived, but hardly one without a yard or vegetable garden. Wealth was not a conspicuous feature of the American city in 1790. Nor was there anything to match the poverty of a European city; and even the slave population of the Carolina rice-fields was less wretched than the contemporary Russian peasant.

Agriculture was the main occupation of nine-tenths of the people. Except along the Hudson, practically every farmer was a freeholder. Save among the Pennsylvania Germans and the more enlightened gentry of the South, methods of agriculture were wasteful and primitive, with little sign of the improved culture and implements that were then

transforming rural England. Wheat bread was largely an upper-class luxury. Indian corn was the principal food crop, with rye a poor second. Brown 'rye and Injun' bread, corn-pone or hoe-cake, potatoes, and hasty-pudding or hominy, with salt pork or codfish, washed down by rum, cider, or whisky, formed the farmer's staple diet from Maine to Georgia, but most of them were able to supplement it by fishing and shooting game. Nobody had heard of vitamins, but they were supplied nonetheless from apple orchards and wild berries. In the large part of the Old West which had been settled within the preceding fifty years, houses were commonly log cabins of one or two rooms and a cockloft; the fields were full of stumps, and acres of dead trees strangled by girdling made a depressing sight for travelers.

Bad roads were one of the penalties that Americans paid for their dispersed settlement and aversion from taxation. In 1790 the difficulties of communication were so great that a detour of several hundred miles by river and ocean was often preferable to an overland journey of 50 miles. It was almost as difficult to assemble the first Congress of the United States as to convene church councils in the Middle Ages. There was a main post-road from Wiscasset in Maine to Savannah in Georgia, over which passengers and mails were shaken and jolted in light, open stage-wagons. It took 29 days for the news of the Declaration of Independence to reach Charleston from Philadelphia. Fords and ferries had not yet been supplanted by bridges; the wooden pile structure across the Charles river at Boston was considered an immense feat of engineering. Washington managed to visit almost every state in the Union in his own coach without serious mishap; but he had to choose a season when the roads were passable, and to undergo discomfort and even danger. Most of the roads were merely wide tracks through the forest, full of rocks and stumps and enormous holes. Many that are marked on the early maps were mere bridle-paths or Indian trails, that would admit no wheeled vehicle.

Now that America has become famous for sanitation, it is a shock to find, at this era and down to the Civil War, that the country impressed European visitors as uncommonly dirty. From persons accustomed to contemporary London or Paris, this meant really dirty! Even in the larger towns streets were seldom paved and never cleaned; offal was deposited in the street or thrown off docks, and, without wire screens, houses were defenseless against swarms of flies and other winged pests.

As no one had yet heard of disease germs, there were intermittent outbreaks of typhoid and yellow fever in the seaports as far north as New Hampshire; one at Philadelphia in 1793 caused 4000 deaths — almost 10 per cent of the total population. Frontiersmen were racked every summer by malarial fevers and agues, transmitted by mosquitoes. Flower gardens were rare; and the pioneer, regarding trees as enemies, neither spared them nor planted them for shade. Country farmhouses in the older-settled region were almost invariably of wood, usually unpainted, resembling dingy boxes surrounded by unseemly household litter. Yet stoutly and honestly built as they were, the colonial houses that have survived long enough to acquire white paint, green blinds, lawns, shrubs, and century-old shade trees, are seen to have both distinction and beauty.

The United States of 1790 was not, by any modern standard, a nation. Materials of a nation were present, but cohesive force was wanting. The English origin of the bulk of the people made for cultural homogeneity; the Maine fisherman could understand the Georgian planter much more readily than a Kentishman could understand a Yorkshireman, or an Alsatian a Breton. Political institutions, though decentralized, were fairly constant in form through the length and breadth of the land. But there was no tradition of union behind the War of Independence, and it was difficult to discover a common interest upon which union could be built. Most citizens of the United States in 1790, if asked their country or nation, would not have answered American, but Carolinian, Virginian, Pennsylvanian, Jerseyman, New Yorker, or New Englander. A political nexus had been found, but unless a national tradition were soon established, the states would develop rivalries similar to those of the republics of Latin America. It would require the highest statesmanship to keep these new commonwealths united. The Federal Constitution made it possible; but few observers in 1790 thought it probable.

2. NEW ENGLAND

In New England, climate, soil, and religion had produced in a century and a half a strongly individualized type, the Yankee, perhaps the most persistent ingredient of the American mixture.

The Yankee was the American Scot; and New England was an eighteenth-century Scotland without the lairds. A severe climate, a

grudging soil that had to be cleared of boulders as well as trees, and a stern puritan faith, dictated the four gospels of education, thrift, ingenuity, and righteousness. By necessity rather than choice, the New Englanders had acquired an aptitude for maritime enterprise and trading. They hailed with joy the new and wider opportunities for seafaring opened by freedom from the Acts of Trade. Seamen of Salem had already ventured to the East Indies with success when Boston, in 1790, celebrated the return of her ship *Columbia*, laden with tea, silk, and porcelain, from a voyage around the world. On her next voyage the *Columbia* sailed up a great river that Vancouver had passed by, gave it her name, and to its banks her flag.

The five New England States were divided politically into townships, about 30 square miles on an average, each containing from less than a hundred to several thousand people. Each was a unit for purposes of local government, conducting its own affairs by town meeting and selectmen, supporting common schools by local taxes, and electing annually to the state legislature a representative, whose votes and doings were keenly scrutinized by his constituents. The nucleus of every township was the meeting-house, part town hall, part place of worship, bordering the village green. Outlying farms, by 1790, in most places outnumbered those with a village house-plot. Most of the common fields had been divided in severalty and enclosed by uncemented stone walls. Families were large, but estates were seldom divided below a hundred acres; a Yankee farmer hoped to make a scholar or minister out of one son, to provide for a second with a tract of wilderness, and let the rest earn their living by working for hire, going to sea, or learning a trade. Until about 1830 the American merchant marine was manned largely by New England lads who were seeking the wherewithal to purchase land and set up housekeeping.

Puritanism had considerably softened during the eighteenth century. The puritan Sabbath was still observed; but there were plenty of frolics at barn-raising and corn-huskings, and heavy drinking on public occasions such as ship-launchings, ordinations, college commencements, and Thanksgiving Day — the puritan substitute for Christmas, which in course of time became an additional day of merry-making. On the whole, living was plain in New England. Even in the family of President Adams, the children were urged to eat a double portion of hasty-pudding, in order to spare the meat that was to follow. Idleness was the

cardinal sin. If a Yankee had nothing else to do, he whittled barrel-bungs from a pine stick, or carved a model of his latest ship; and he usually had much else to do. New England housewives spun, wove, and tailored their woollen garments and made cloth for sale. Small fulling mills and paper mills were established at the numerous waterfalls, and distilleries in the swamps turned West Indian molasses into that pleasant if fiery beverage. New England rum. Wooden-ware was made by snowbound farmers for export to the West Indies, nails were cut and headed from wrought iron rods at fireside forges, and in some towns shoes were made for export. Connecticut, in particular, had attained a nice balance between farming, seafaring, and handicraft, which made the people of that state renowned for steady habits and mechanical ingenuity. Before the century was out, Eli Whitney of New Haven devised the cotton gin and local gunsmiths employed at the federal arsenal, Springfield, Mass., established the first approximation to the modern assembly line, enabling a small labor force to turn out 442 muskets a month. New England was ripe for transition from handicraft to the factory system; but the success of her seafarers, and the facility of emigration, postponed industrial revolution for another generation.

The South American patriot Francisco de Miranda, who traveled through New England in the summer of 1784, found much that was kindly, pleasant, and in good taste. At New Haven he is taken over Yale College by President Stiles, converses with a classically educated miller who had been a cavalry captain in the war, and views the famous 'blue laws' in the town archives. Proceeding to Wethersfield, he attends Sunday meeting, and admires the manner in which the psalms and responses are sung by the congregation, trained by a music master. At Windsor he enjoys a lively literary conversation with John Trumbull, the painter, as well as with the innkeeper, who is discovered reading Rollin's *Ancient History*, and stoutly maintains Ben Franklin to be a better man than Aristides. Thence to Middletown, and a boat excursion on the river with General Parsons and other jolly fellows, drinking copiously of punch 'in pure republican style.' Newport he thinks justly called the paradise of New England, containing, besides hospitable natives, many ladies and gentlemen from Charleston, S.C., who were using it as a summer resort. The leading lights of Providence, on the other hand, are provincial and vulgar, (Commandore Esck Hopkins, formerly of the United States Navy, even insisting that there was no such place as the City of Mexico.

Miranda enters Boston armed with letters of introduction to the 'best people,' whose ladies he finds vain, luxurious, and too much given to the use of cosmetics; he predicts bankruptcy for Boston within twenty years. Sam Adams, however, is still faithful to republican simplicity. After carefully inspecting Harvard College, Miranda reports it better suited to turn out Protestant clergymen than intelligent and liberal citizens. He visits the studio of the self-taught painter Edward Savage, and predicts that with a European education his talent will take him far. (Savage did visit Europe, and his portrait of Washington is said by contemporaries to be the best likeness of the great man.) From Boston, Miranda takes the post road to Portsmouth, N.H., and is much impressed by evidences of thrift and prosperity along the north shore of Massachusetts. 'Liberty inspires such intelligence and industry in these towns . . . that the people out of their slender resources maintain their large families, pay heavy taxes, and live with comfort and taste, a thousand times happier than the proprietors of the rich mines and fertile lands of Mexico, Peru, Buenos Aires, Caracas, and the whole Spanish-American continent.'

For Portsmouth itself we have a flattering description from Count Francisco dal Verme; a 25-year-old aristocrat from Milan who toured the United States in 1783-84. After attending 'meeting' on an August Sunday with Colonel Langdon, he wrote in his diary that he couldn't begin to describe 'either the beauty or the number' of the ladies in the congregation, 'nor the elegance of their clothes, made in the fashion of the latest taste in France.' They almost made him forget to listen to the sermon! Next day, he went for a sail, attended a horse race and a dancing school of 30 couples, dined with General Whipple, and 'with difficulty took leave of my good host.' Another Milanese gentleman, Count Luigi Castiglione, was similarly impressed in 1787. He pushed on by horseback through Maine to Camden, beyond which horses were useless; so he chartered a schooner to sail up the Penobscot and visited the Abnaki Indian reservation at Oldtown, the object of this long detour. He admired their basketry, moccasins, and snowshoes, and sketched these and other Indian possessions.

The New Englanders were very well satisfied with themselves in 1790 and had reason to be; they had struck root in a region where nature was not lavish, produced a homogeneous and happy society, won liberty, and, by their own enterprise, got out of the depression. Disorderly when royal governors attempted to thwart their will, the Yankees had sloughed off cruder phases of democracy; for another generation the

leadership of their clergy, well-to-do merchants, and conservative lawyers would not be successfully challenged. Outside New England, where they were familiar as sailors or peddlers, the Yankees were regarded much as Scotsmen then were by the English: often envied, sometimes respected, but generally disliked.

3. THE MIDDLE STATES

New York State, heterogeneous in 1790, never was destined to attain homogeneity. The Dutch 'Knickerbocker' families shared a social ascendancy with the descendants of English and Huguenot merchants. There were many villages where Dutch was still spoken, and Albany was still thoroughly Dutch, ruled by *mynheers* who lived in substantial brick houses with stepped gables. But the Netherlands element comprised only one-sixth of the 300,000 inhabitants of New York State. For the rest, there were Germans in the Mohawk valley and Ulster county, a few families of Sephardic Jews in New York City, an appreciable element of Scots and Irish, and a strong majority of English blood, mostly the fast-increasing Yankee element.

New York was only the fifth state in population in 1790: a fourfold increase in 30 years made it first in 1820. Settlement of the interior explains the difference. In 1790 the inhabited area of New York followed the Hudson river from New York City to Albany, whence one branch of settlement continued up the Mohawk toward Lake Erie, and a thin line of clearings pushed up by Lake George and Lake Champlain, which Burgoyne had found a wilderness. There were also a few islands of settlement such as Cooperstown, where James Fenimore Cooper was cradled in the midst of the former hunting grounds of the Six Nations. Socially, New York was still the most aristocratic of the states, in spite of the extensive confiscation and subdividing of loyalists' estates; for most of the patulous managed to retain their vast properties. One out of every seven New York families held slaves in 1790, and nine years elapsed before gradual emancipation began. The qualifications for voting and for office were high.

New York City owed its prosperity, and its 33,000 inhabitants, to a unique position at the mouth of the Hudson river, the greatest tidal inlet between the St. Lawrence and the River Plate. It was the natural gateway to the Iroquois country, which now began to be settled by white

people. In 1825 the Erie Canal, following the lowest watershed between the Atlantic states and the Lakes, made New York City the principal gateway to the West and the financial center of the Union. The merchants did not need to be so venturesome as those of New England and Baltimore, and they spent more on good living than on churches and schools. They too had a family college — Columbia (late King's); but while Boston was forming learned institutions, and Philadelphia supporting a literary journal and a Philosophical Society, New York was founding the Columbian Order, better known as Tammany Hall. In the midst of this wealthy, gay, and somewhat cynical society, Alexander Hamilton reached manhood and Washington Irving was born.

New Jersey, a farming state of less than 200,000 people, has been compared with a barrel tapped at both ends by New York and Philadelphia. Travelers along the road between these two cities admired the Jersey apple orchards, the well-cultivated farms, and, at the pleasant village of Princeton, the College of New Jersey whose Nassau Hall, 180 feet long and four stories high, was reputed to be the largest building in the Thirteen States. At the falls of the Passaic river, near Newark, an incorporated company had just founded Paterson, the first factory village in America. South of this main road lay a region of pine barrens and malarial marshes.

Pennsylvania, second largest state in the Union, with a population of 435,000, had acquired a certain uniformity in diversity. Her racial heterogeneity, democratic polity, and social structure, ranging from wealthy merchants to crude frontiersmen, made Pennsylvania a microcosm of the America to be. Philadelphia was the principal port of immigration between 1725 and 1825; and the boat-shaped Conestoga wagons of the Pennsylvania Dutch needed but slight improvement to become the 'prairie schooner' of westward advance. Pennsylvania was still in the throes of democratic experiment. Her radical state government, with a unicameral legislature and a plural executive, had become notoriously factious and incompetent. In 1791 a new constitution with a bicameral legislature was adopted, but manhood suffrage was retained; and this laid a firm foundation for subsequent democratization of Pennsylvania.

Philadelphia, at the junction of the Delaware and Schuylkill rivers, and with a population of 45,000 in 1790, was easily the first city in the United States for commerce, architecture, and culture. During the next ten years it was the seat of the Federal Government and of a more

brilliant 'republican court' than the city of Washington could show for a century to come. Owing largely to Quaker influence, Philadelphia was well provided with charitable institutions, and amateur scientists. Strangely enough, here as elsewhere in the United States, the good start in a really American literature made by such men as Noah Webster, Joel Barlow, Joseph Hopkinson, and Philip Freneau during the creative period 1782-89, came to a halt. When Tom Moore visited Delaware's green banks in 1804, Joseph Denme, Jared Ingersoll, and Brockden Brown, whom he hailed as the 'sacred few' who would save 'Columbia' from Boeotian aridity, were producing pallid imitations of *The Spectator*, dreary tragedies of medieval Europe, novels of mystery and horror. Hugh Brackenridge of Pittsburgh alone expressed the rich color and wilderness flavor of youthful Pennsylvania.

A few miles from Philadelphia one reached the garden spot of eighteenth-century America, a belt of rich limestone soil that crossed the Susquehanna river and extended into Maryland and the Valley of Virginia. The fortunate inhabitants of this region were reaping huge profits in 1790 by reason of European crop failures, and were to prosper still more through the wars that flowed from the French Revolution. 'The whole country is well cultivated,' wrote a Dutch financier who passed through this region in 1794, 'and what forests the farmers keep are stocked with trees of the right kind — chestnut, locust, walnut, maple, white oak. It is a succession of hills, not too high, and the aspect of the country is very beautiful.' Lancaster, with 4000 inhabitants, was the largest inland town in the United States. Here, and in the limestone belt, most of the farmers and townspeople were German. They were by far the best husbandmen in America, using a proper rotation, with clover and root crops. Their houses, heated by stoves, were commonly built of stone; their fences of stout posts and rails; but what most impressed strangers were the great barns with huge gable-end doors, through which a loaded wagon could drive onto a wide-threshing floor, flanked by spacious hay-lofts, cattle and sheep pens, and horse stables. The Germans were divided into a number of sects, some of which, like the Amish Mennonites, have retained their quaint costumes and puritanism into the twentieth century. They supported six weekly newspapers in their own language and were as keen household manufacturers as the Yankees; but Chastellux found them lacking in public spirit, compared with the English-speaking Americans, 'content . . . with being only the

spectators of their own wealth,' and with the standards of a German peasant.

Lancaster was the parting point for two streams of westward emigration. One wagon road took a southwesterly direction, crossed the Potomac at Harpers Ferry, and entered the Shenandoah valley of Virginia, between the Blue Ridge and the Unakas. The Pittsburgh wagon road struck out northwesterly, crossed the Susquehanna by ford or ferry at Harrisburg (the future capital of Pennsylvania), and followed the beautiful wooded valley of the Juniata to its headwaters. This region was inhabited mainly by Ulstermen, although in the easternmost section they were rapidly being bought out by the more thrifty and land-hungry Germans. To the north and west of the upper Susquehanna, Pennsylvania was still a mountainous virgin forest. After a long, painful pull up the rocky, rutty wagon road, to an elevation of some 2500 feet, you attained the Allegheny front, an escarpment from which, by a rolling, densely wooded plateau, you descended westward to where the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers come together to form the Ohio. At this point you reached Pittsburgh, a thriving village in the midst of virgin coal and iron deposits, the most important of three inner gateways to the Far West. Already fleets of covered wagons were bringing in settlers destined for Kentucky and goods to be distributed down the mighty valley of the Ohio and Mississippi.

4. THE SOUTH

Twenty-five miles south of Philadelphia the post-road crossed the Mason-Dixon Line, an internal boundary that bulks large in American history. Originally drawn to divide Pennsylvania from Delaware and Maryland, in 1790 it was already recognized as the boundary between the farming, or commercial, and the plantation states. From 1804 to 1805 it divided the free and the slave states; and even yet it is the boundary of sentiment between North and South.

Little Delaware, apart from flour mills around Wilmington, was a farming community, steadfastly conservative in politics. In Maryland, with 320,000 souls, one-third slaves, we reach the first state where slavery underlay the economic system. The old English Catholic families still retained some of the better plantations on both shores of Chesapeake Bay, but it was the Irish Carrolls who provided a 'signer,' a

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United States Senator, and the first Roman Catholic bishop in the United States. Maryland produced the best wheat flour in America, and a dark variety of tobacco chiefly appreciated by the French. The low-land planters were famous for hospitality, and for the various and delicious methods devised by their black cooks for preparing the oysters, soft-shell crabs, terrapin, shad, canvas-back ducks, and other delicacies afforded by Chesapeake Bay. Annapolis, the pleasant and hospitable state capital, had just been made the seat of St. John's College.

Baltimore, a mere village before the War of Independence, approached Boston in population. A deep harbor in Chesapeake Bay, water-driven flour mills, and proximity to wheat-growing regions made it the metropolis for an important section of Pennsylvania. Baltimore was already famous for belles, two of whom married kings, but did not quite make queens. Her swift schooners, the Baltimore clippers, made excellent privateers. The Maryland piedmont resembled the limestone belt of Pennsylvania: a rich rolling grain country tilled by English and German farmers, with the aid of a few slaves. This region, in combination with Baltimore, neutralized the tidewater aristocracy and gradually drew Maryland into the social and economic orbit of the Northern states.

From Baltimore a road that long remained the despair of travelers traversed Maryland to Georgetown, just below the Great Falls of the Potomac. Here, at the head of navigation, the city of Washington was being planned. Crossing the river, one entered the Old Dominion, with a population of 748,000, of which 40 per cent were slaves.²

The tidewater section of Virginia, east of the fall line which passes through Georgetown, Richmond, and Petersburg, by 1790 had seen its best days. The state capital had been transferred to Richmond, at the falls of the James; only William and Mary College kept Williamsburg alive. Norfolk had not yet recovered from the fire of 1776. The 'old fields,' the exhausted tobacco lands, were now reverting to forest, and the wisest planters were emigrating to Kentucky.

One of the best plantations of the Virginia tidewater was Mount Vernon, where General Washington had hoped to spend the remainder of his days as a modern farmer, improving American husbandry by experiment and example. He studied the best works on the subject, corresponded with English experts such as Arthur Young, imported im-

2. Not including the 74,000 in Kentucky (17 per cent slaves).

proved implements, and applied new methods. Tobacco culture had long since been given up at Mount Vernon, and now wheat, flax, and root crops were being substituted for corn, a five-year rotation of crops adopted, and flocks of sheep raised on turnips or clover.

Washington's relation to Mount Vernon was like that of an industrial manager to his plant. He inherited an estate of 2500 acres and added about 5500 more, until his estate stretched ten miles along the Potomac. The 3500 acres under cultivation around 1790 were divided by tracts of woodland into separate farms, each with its own force of slaves and an overseer, who must report weekly how he had employed every hand. Brood-mares and blooded stallions occupied the best pastures. Royal Gift, a fifteen-hand jackass presented by the King of Spain, had a special paddock and groom, as befitted the ancestor of the American army mule. The General's cattle were undersized and of low breed; his hogs ran at large through the woodlands, affording illicit sport for a pack of French boar-hounds, an unwelcome gift from Lafayette. Mount Vernon was an industrial as well as an agricultural unit. There were slave blacksmiths, carpenters, and even bricklayers; a cider press and still-house, where excellent rye and Bourbon whisky were made, and sold in barrels made by slave coopers from home-grown oak. Herring and shad fisheries in the Potomac provided food for the slaves; a grist-mill turned Washington's improved strain of wheat into the finest grade of flour, which went to market in his own schooner. There was a weaving-shed, where a dozen different textiles were produced from local wool and flax and West Indian cotton.

For recreation the General hunted the fox with his own and his neighbors' packs of hounds; shot wild fowl, attended Masonic lodge at Alexandria, and with Martha danced at assemblies in the same pleasant town. A constant stream of relations and friends flowed through the mansion house, few distinguished travelers came South unprovided with a letter to the great man, and no gentleman could be turned away from his door. The guests, in fact, ate up most of the increase not consumed by the slaves, whose children Washington was too humane to sell away from their parents.

This was the life that Washington loved, and in which he hoped to spend his declining years. Even on his campaigns, and in the Presidency, he would write sixteen-page letters of instruction to his overseers. The more I am acquainted with agricultural affairs, the better I am pleased

with them,' he wrote to Arthur Young in 1788. 'How much more delightful . . . is the task of making improvements in the earth than all the vain glory which can be acquired from ravaging it by the most uninterrupted career of conquests.'

The Virginia piedmont between the fall line and the Blue Ridge, for the most part a fruitful, rolling country, had become the seat of all that was healthy and vigorous in the plantation system; and Richmond flourished as the principal outlet of the James river valley. Most of the Virginia statesmen of the revolutionary and early federal eras were either born in this region or grew to manhood in its wilder margins. The old colonial families, excepting a few like the Randolphs, were being supplanted by others, often allied to them on the distaff side, like the Jeffersons, Madisons, Manroes, Taylors, Tylers, and Marshalls. If the proper object of society be to produce and maintain a public-spirited and intelligent aristocracy, Virginia had achieved it. If it be to maintain a high general level of comfort and intelligence, she had not. Below the 'first families,' but continually pushing into their level by marriage, was a class of lesser planters, uneducated, provincial, and often rude. Below them was an unstable and uneasy class of yeomen, outnumbering the planters in the piedmont. Descended largely from indentured servants and deported convicts, these 'peasants,' as the gentry called them, were illiterate, ferocious, and quarrelsome. Self-contained plantations, with slave artisans and mechanics, left small demand for skilled white labor, and made small farms unprofitable. Hence the Virginia yeoman had but the alternative of migrating westward, or of becoming a 'poor white' despised even by the slaves.

In the lowlands the slaves outnumbered the whites; in the piedmont they comprised about one-third of the total population. Few denied that slavery was a moral evil and a menace to the country. Almost every educated Virginian hoped to make good the opening words of his Bill of Rights 'that all men are by nature free and independent.' But a state whose population was 40 per cent Negro quailed before such a social revolution. Jefferson counted on the young abolitionists that Chancellor Wythe was making in William and Mary College. But in a few years' time the cotton gin gave chattel slavery a new lease on life; and, shortly after Jefferson died, a young professor at William and Mary began to preach the doctrine that Negro slavery was justified by history and ordained by God.

As one rode westward across the Virginia piedmont, with the crestline of the Blue Ridge looming in the distance, the forest became more dense, the large plantations less numerous, the farms of independent yeomen more frequent, and the cultivation of tobacco gave place to corn and grazing. Between the Blue Ridge and the higher folds of the Appalachians lies the Shenandoah valley, largely peopled by Scots and Germans, and feeling itself a province apart from lowland and piedmont. Here in Rockingham county, Abraham Lincoln, grandfather of the President, lived until 1784. Still less did the trans-Appalachian part of Virginia, a densely wooded plateau sloping to the upper Ohio, resemble the Virginia of the planters. In 1790 it was a more primitive frontier than Kentucky. This is the section that in 1863 became the state of West Virginia.

South from Petersburg, Virginia, a two days' journey through a sandy plain covered with pine forest, took one to Halifax, one of several pretty seaports on the rivers of North Carolina. This 'Tar-Heel State,' so called from her production of naval stores, was still marked by the geographical and demographical divisions that made trouble in the 1770's. The coastal plain, a hundred miles or more wide, consisted of pine barrens with soil too sandy for wheat or tobacco, and extensive marshes like the Dismal Swamp. The river mouths were closed against vessels drawing above ten feet by the barrier beaches that enclosed Pamlico and Allamante Sounds, and the region was sparsely settled. President Washington, traveling through in 1791, found it 'the most barren country he ever beheld,' without a single house of an elegant appearance.

The piedmont of North Carolina was a thriving region of upland farms, supporting a large population of Germans, Ulstermen, English, and Highland Scots. There was little communication between coast and piedmont through the pine barrens, and less sympathy. Petersburg, Va., and Charleston, S.C., were nearer or more convenient markets for the upland farmers than the tiny ports of their own state. Local particularism was so strong that the legislature abandoned Governor Tryon's 'palace' at New Bern and became peripatetic. Only by creating a new state capital, at Raleigh on the falls of the Neuse river, could it manage to settle down.

Although there were large tobacco plantations in North Carolina, the state on the whole was a white farmer-democracy. Honest mediocrity typified North Carolina statesmanship from the eighteenth century

to the twentieth, when an industrial revolution brought material progress, enthusiasm for learning, and accomplishment in the arts.

South Carolina boasted a patrician society, centered in Charleston, which in 1790, with a population of 16,000, was the fourth city in America and metropolis of the lower South. The Reverend Jedidiah Morse in his *American Geography* (1789) wrote, 'In no part of America are the social blessings enjoyed more rationally and liberally than in Charleston. Unaffected hospitality, affability, ease in manners and address, and a disposition to make their guests welcome, easy and pleased with themselves, are characteristics of the respectable people of Charleston.' One can well imagine that stiff New England Calvinist succumbing to the graceful attentions of a Charleston family, while he sipped their madeira wine on a spacious verandah overlooking a tropical garden.

The South Carolina planters went to their country houses in the coastal plain in November, when the first frosts removed the danger of fever in that subtropical climate; and took their families back to Charleston for the gay season from January to March. Early spring, a most anxious period in rice culture, was passed in the plantation mansion — shaded by a classic portico, and surrounded by groves of live oaks, hung with Spanish moss. The hot months would be spent at a summer house in the pine hills, or at Newport, Rhode Island. Popular education was little attended to, but the College of Charleston was established in 1785, and the more opulent families continued to send their sons to Old England or New England for higher education.

Rice, the economic basis of the lower country, required intensive cultivation, along such parts of the tidal rivers as permitted artificial flooding with fresh water. These regions were so unhealthy for white people that Negro labor, immune to malaria, was a necessity; and in no part of the United States were slaves so numerous. Out of 1600 heads of families in the rural part of the Charleston district, in 1790, 1300 held slaves to the number of 43,000. South Carolina not only blocked abolition of the African slave trade in the Federal Constitution, but reopened traffic by state law in 1803.

Indigo culture had been abandoned with the loss of the parliamentary bounty; but the South Carolina planters, in 1790, were experimenting with long-staple sea-island cotton; and the next year Robert Owen spun into yarn the first two bags that were sent to England. The short-staple upland cotton, which could be grown inland, was so difficult to separate

from its seed as to be unmarketable until after the cotton gin was invented in 1793. One effect of this was to extend the plantation system into the more populous back-country. In 1790 the upland people won their first victory by transferring the state capital to Columbia; but the piedmont was still under-represented in the legislature, and poor men were denied office by high property qualifications. John C. Calhoun, destined to weld the South and divide the Union, was a boy of eight in the upper country, in 1790.

Across the Savannah river from South Carolina, Georgia retained few traces of General Oglethorpe's pious experiment. It had developed, like South Carolina, into a slave-holding rice coast, a belt of infertile pine barrens, and a rolling, wooded piedmont of hunter folk and frontier farmers. These Georgia 'crackers' were vigorous and lawless, hard drinkers and rough fighters. Desperately eager to despoil the Creek Indians of their fertile cornfields across the Oconee river, the up-country Georgians gave constant trouble to the Federal Government.

5. 'AMERICA THE HOPE OF THE WORLD'

Such, in their broader outlines, were the Thirteen States, and the people thereof, seven years after the war. Of such a people, so circumstanced, the friends of liberty in Europe had high expectations. The French statesman Turgot wrote in 1778:

This people is the hope of the human race. It may become the model. It ought to show the world by facts, that men can be free and yet peaceful, and may dispense with the chains in which tyrants and knaves of every colour have presumed to bind them, under pretext of the public good. The Americans should be an example of political, religious, commercial and industrial liberty. The asylum they offer to the oppressed of every nation, the avenue of escape they open, will compel governments to be just and enlightened; and the rest of the world in due time will see through the empty illusions in which policy is conceived. But to obtain these ends for us, America must secure them to herself; and must not become, as so many of your ministerial writers have predicted, a mass of divided powers, contending for territory and trade, cementing the slavery of peoples by their own blood.

Yet there was one dominant force in United States history that neither Turgot nor anyone foresaw in 1785: expansion. With a prize such as the West at their back doors, the people of the United States would have

been more than human had they been content with a 'state of nature' between the Atlantic and the Appalachians. For a century to come, the subduing of the temperate regions of North America to the purposes of civilized life was to be the main business of the United States. In 1790 the boundaries of the republic included 800,000, in 1880 3 million square miles. In 1790 the population was 4 million; in 1960 179 million. This folk movement, comparable in modern history only with the barbaric invasions of the Roman Empire, gives the history of the United States a different quality from that of Europe; different even from that of Canada and Australia, by reason of the absence of exterior control. The advancing frontier, with growing industrialism, set the rhythm of American society, colored its politics, and rendered more difficult the problem of union. Yet, as Turgot warned us, only union could secure the gain and fulfill the promise of the American Revolution.